

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 09895 261159 Z

53

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 AID-20 SS-15 NSC-10 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 EB-11 IGA-02 RSR-01 /085 W
----- 052095

P R 261058 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH PRIORITY

SECSTATE WASHDC 4314

SECDEF WASHDC

CINCPAC CP SMITH

USSAG

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

DIA WASHDC

JCS WASHDC

COMUSMACTHAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 9895

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: EGEN, EAID, CB

SUBJECT: RICE FOR CAMBODIA

STATE PASS AID

REF: A. PHNOM PENH 6270

B. BANGKOK 9722

1. CHARGE AND ECON/ COML COUNSELOR MADE INQUIRIES JUNE 25 ABOUT RICE PROSPECTS AT APPROPRIATE RTG LEVELS. LY KIM HENG AND COUNSELOR HAVE ALSO BEEN IN CONTACT. NOW VERIFIED THAT AT MEETING REPORTED REFTEL B, RTG OFFICIALS PROMISED TO PROVIDE AMOUNTS STATED, NAMELY, 5,000 TONS NOW, 5,000 IN MID- JULY AND POSSIBLY 25,000 AFTER SECOND CROP HARVESTED. HOWEVER, LATE IN SAME DAY MINISTER OF COMMERCE DECIDED AND GAVE INSTRUCTIONS TO HIS STAFF TO EXPORT ONLY 5,000 TONS WITH ADDITIONAL AMOUNTS TO BE LEFT FOR SUBSEQUENT NEGOTIATION AND CABINET DECISION.

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PAGE 02 BANGKO 09895 261159 Z

2. CHARGE INFORMED BY MFA THAT DEPFONMIN ACTIVELY WORKING TO REVERSE COMMERCE MINISTER' S ACTION BE SENDING STRONG MESSAGE TO PM. JUNE 26 SAME SOURCE IN MFA INFORMAL COUNSELOR THAT CABINET IN SESSION ALL DAY, BUT HAD NOT YET ACTED ON RICE FOR CAMBODIA ITEM BY MID- AFTERNOON. EXPECTED ACTION BEFORE SESSION CONCLUDED THAT DAY AND SEEMED CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT OUTCOME. LY KIM HENG INFORMED COUNSELOR THAT MINISTER OF COMMERCE HAD REFERRED TO CABINET DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO EXPORT THE SECOND 5,000 TONS.

3. SAME DAY A DEPUTY UNDERSECRETARY IN MINISTRY OF COMMERCE TOLD ECON/ COML COUNSLOR THAT THAILAND IN GRAVE RISK OF RICE SHORTAGE BY END OF YEAR IF THERE SHOULD BE DELAY IN HARVESTING OF REGULAR RICE CROP IF YIELD SHOULD BE REDUCED OF UNFAVORABLE WEATHER OR OTHER CAUSES. DECLARED THAT RTG WOULD NOT KNOW UNTIL AUGUST WHETHER OR NOT IT WOULD HAVE RICE ENOUGH FOR BALANCE OF YEAR, EVEN THOUGH RICE SUPPLIES ADEQUATE AT PRESENT. SUGGESTED CAMBODIANS EAT PARBOILED RICE, OF WHICH THAILAND HAS SURPLUS.

3. DURING CALL ON UNDERSECRETARY PREVIOUS DAY IN SAME MINISTRY, COUNSELOR WAS TOLD THAT RTG WAS EXPLORING POSSIBILITY OF BUYING RICE FROM US TO ADD TO EXISTING RESERVES. WAS INFORMED US CROP HAD BEEN EXPORTED AND NOT LIKELY THAT SELLERS COULD BE FOUND EXCEPT FOR SMALL AMOUNTS OF SPECIALTY RICE.

4. EMBASSY WILL REPORT CABINET DECISION AS SOON AS KNOWN.
MASTERS

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NNNNMAFVVZCZ

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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TAGS: EAID, EGEN, CB
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